

**Proposal:     The Parliamentary Weighted Vote**  
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The proposed PWV system does not replace FPTP, but uses it to constitute a parliament that is responsive to the desire for proportional representation and to the need across Canada for MPs accountable to voters in a local riding. It can be implemented for almost zero additional cost and is easy to explain to voters.

**Introduction:**

The FPTP system has drawn much criticism for allowing a small percentage of voters to elect a majority government. This leaves the impression that a losing vote doesn't count, thus contributing to a lack of voter involvement.

A new system should:

- Give every vote some significance.
- Make votes in Parliament more reflective of the popular vote.
- Elect a representative in each riding *known to the residents*, able to act on their behalf on local issues and represent their interests in debates on policies that affect them.
- Reduce the impediments on small parties, allowing them to express a voice proportionate to their national support.
- Avoid reducing the profiles of major parties so much, that coherent governance is replaced by single issue bargaining between multitudes of small parties.

It is crucial that the new system must be, and be seen to be, fair for all current political parties to avoid accusations of favoritism and "stacking the deck" by a current government.

It is also important to recognize that if a new system costs a lot of money to implement, people will be loathe to change to another system should that expensive system fall short of expectations. The more it costs, the harder it will be to revise. The PWV involves no significant expense to implement.

**The Proposal:**

1. Retain the current system of ridings and elect all members exactly as we do today, the same as "First Past the Post".
2. To have any voice in Parliament, a party must have at least ONE member elected, (thus reducing the chances that a fringe party with no viable candidates could have undue influence in a parliament based solely on a small percentage of the popular vote).

3. Each member is awarded a “*Parliamentary Weighted Vote*” which is comprised of one vote per member as we have now, plus a fractional vote based on the national popularity of their party. (The weight of this fractional vote can be decided once the scheme is adopted.)

As a demonstration, consider the results of the 2015 election.

In 2015	<u>SEATS</u>	<u>POP. VOTE</u> (Rounded)
Liberals	184	40%
Conservative	99	32%
New Democratic	44	20%
Bloc Quebecois	10	5%
Green	1	3%

**Voting would involve 338 member votes (one for each elected MP) and 338 votes to represent the popular vote.**

In the current parliament, members’ votes would be calculated as follows:

Liberal party gets  $338 * 40\% = 135$  “popular” votes and 184 member votes.  
Each Liberal member would have  $(184 + 135)/184 = 1.7$  votes.

Conservative party gets  $338 * 32\% = 108$  “popular” votes and 99 member votes.  
Each Conservative member gets  $(99 + 108)/99 = 2.1$  votes

New Democrats get  $338 * 20\% = 68$  “popular” votes and 44 member votes  
Each NDP member gets  $(44 + 68)/44 = 2.5$  votes

Bloc Quebecois gets  $338 * 5\% = 17$  “popular” votes and 10 member votes  
Each BQ member gets  $(10 + 17)/10 = 2.7$  votes

Green Party gets  $338 * 3\% = 10$  “popular” votes and 1 member vote  
Each Green Party member gets  $(1 + 10)/1 = 11$  votes

If all other parties oppose a government Bill, we would see:

184 Liberals vote YEA, giving a total of  $184 * 1.7 = 313$  *parliamentary votes* FOR

99 Conservatives vote NAY, for	$99 * 2.1 = 208$
44 NDP vote NAY, for	$44 * 2.5 = 110$
10 BQ vote NAY, for	$10 * 2.7 = 27$
1 Green votes NAY for	$1 * 11 = 11$

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356 *parliamentary votes* AGAINST

Thus, in this system, a “First Past the Post” majority is not always an absolute majority. It is comforting that in the proposed system, *although an absolute majority is possible, it requires a party to have a large popular vote as well as a large number of members.*

The role of individual members elected in local ridings is preserved, in that an MP in the Conservative caucus still would have the right to cast his 2.5 votes with the government, if he felt it was important to his riding. However, the “popular” votes would remain with the caucus if the member “crossed the floor”, since the PWV is assigned based on the national popularity of a party and its platform.

The role of the popular vote reduces motivation for strategic voting in elections and will certainly motivate voters to cast ballots whether or not one candidate’s victory seems assured. It will also motivate campaign organizers to pay attention to *every riding*, not just ones in which they feel they can win.

### **In Conclusion:**

I have not included critiques of other systems of voting. You have heard much discussion of the pros and cons of each. As far as I know, this is a singular approach blending the advantages of locally elected members and recognizing the popular vote.

Although I have not found any other jurisdictions that use this approach, it is worth noting that (as of Sept. 24/16) similar (yet not identical) proposals have been submitted by Mr. Todd Keough, Mr. Paul Schellenbert, Mr. John Stillich, and especially Mr. James Wilson, who has given a very complete description of relevant background information for his “Single Member-Proportional Vote” proposal.

(<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/421/ERRE/Brief/BR8397890/br-external/WilsonJames-e.pdf> )

I note that the Electoral Reform Committee has been populated proportional to the popular vote for each of the parties that elected at least one member. So this proposal extends a principle already accepted by a committee to each vote in the House.

It strikes me that we should not shy away from a practical system with so many advantages, just because Canadians are the only ones considering it. The world may well need Canada to lead the way with this as well as other issues.

I hope my thoughts provoke useful discussion and I wish you every success in developing a system of voting that will serve all Canadians well, far into the future. It is a weighty, but noble task and I thank each and every one of you for your efforts.

Doug De La Matter